Intelligence Challenges of Civil-Military Operations

Adam B. Siegel

IT IS THE SUMMER of 1994, and the United States is threatening to invade Haiti. A young, inexperienced US Army officer is assigned to run a brigade civil-military operations center (CMOC).

The young officer realizes he needs information on the civilian actors in the brigade's area of operations. Knowing nothing about the mayors, school principals, local administrators of public services, relief agencies or even where international relief agencies have warehouses, he turns to the brigade intelligence officers. They cannot help. The young officer contacts other government organizations and is given information about activities in Port-au-Prince, nothing about the areas where his brigade will operate. He contacts relief organizations and is given telephone numbers for relief workers in Haiti. He attempts to contact the relief workers but is stopped short—the brigade intelligence staff tells him that he is threatening operational security.

The intervention begins. The young officer's brigade deploys to Haiti. Again, he lacks information, this time about the judges, principals and criminal activity in Haiti's civilian society.

Several days after the brigade arrives in Haiti, soldiers of the brigade detain a Haitian for trying to sell marijuana to soldiers. It is not until after the Haitian is on an Army helicopter en route to Port-au-Prince that the young officer learns of this. He wonders if anyone even knows whether this is illegal in Haiti. After all, no one has provided him with an English-language version of the Haitian law code.[1]

Over the past decade, international military forces have intervened in complex situations that combine conflict with substantial human suffering. Whether employing blue-helmet UN forces or multinational coalitions under UN mandate, these stability and support operations have presented military commanders with challenges different from traditional warfighting operations. Information, analysis and intelligence challenges are similar to many of the other issues faced by militaries around the world as they grapple with the reality and difficulties of interagency and interorganizational operations. Unlike the multinational forces that drove Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait in spring 1991, the majority of recent international military operations have relied on civil-military cooperation as fundamental to success. During these operations, the civil-military team must be concerned with the size, capabilities and intentions of enemy combat forces as well as numerous civilian-sector issues.

Unlike the multinational forces that drove Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait in spring 1991, the majority of recent international military operations have relied on civil-military cooperation as fundamental to success. During these operations, the civil-military team must be concerned with the size, capabilities and intentions of enemy combat forces as well as numerous civilian-sector issues . . . that would not normally concern a commander during combat.

Peace support operations have three fundamental intelligence challenges that may not exist in a NATO-Warsaw Pact confrontation or other traditional warfighting operations:

- Civil-sector issues. Unlike warfare, developments in the civil sector are critical for the development of the military operation.
- New partners and sources. A military force will not be isolated from other elements of a civil-military intervention; the intelligence community cannot be isolated from other elements of the force.

• Numerous partners and sources. In civil-military operations (CMO), intelligence managers must coordinate and cooperate with more organizations and sources than in conventional war.

After years of civil war punctuated by several interventions, NATO operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina began with a substantial and well-developed international presence. This included an intelligence presence on the ground by NATO nations involved in UN operations in the former Yugoslavia. This was an alliance-run operation that benefited from more than four decades of Cold War technical, doctrinal and procedural interoperability. The four- and three-star headquarters in Sarajevo derived from already existing multinational command structures.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, senior NATO intelligence officers managed a network of information sources and intelligence partners more complex than that managed in a conventional conflict. These included the Allied Military Intelligence Battalion, national intelligence centers—collocated with SFOR headquarters in Sarajevo—national civilian intelligence agencies, civilian organization information sources and numerous staff elements.

These characteristics seem to differ from non-NATO interventions in the 1990s. US-led interventions in Northern Iraq, Haiti and Somalia occurred where no major international presence existed. No established, well-developed intelligence infrastructures were in place to support CMO. Differences also existed across the societies in which international interventions occurred. Yugoslavia was a modern, industrialized European nation, with a functioning government; Haiti, Liberia, Cambodia and Rwanda were not nearly as well developed and government was completely absent. A third difference was the government's structure.

Despite these differences, important similarities exist between NATO and non-NATO interventions. More than 10 NATO nations had intelligence cells in each headquarters, and each cell had its own rules and procedures for sharing information with NATO and other nations involved. Each of the national elements maintained a significant degree of autonomy and were often convinced, rather than commanded, by higher headquarters to take certain courses of action.

During interventions in the 1990s, military forces have had to operate with other international actors, including international organizations (IOs), government organizations (GOs) and nongovernment organizations (NGOs). These other organizations were often on the ground to greet the military forces when they arrived.

During CMO, the intelligence community will have to collect and analyze information about a wide set of issues that would not normally concern a commander during combat. During Operation *Restore Hope* in Somalia, military commanders required information on issues that included refugee health, the development of tribal consuls and the effects of food distribution on the local economy. During Operation *Uphold Democracy* in Haiti, military commanders were concerned about reconstituting the local police and judicial system and about the potential flow of drugs throughout Haiti. During Operation *Joint Endeavor* in Bosnia, organized crime, government formation, house evictions, refugee voting patterns and reconstruction were major concerns for commanders. These issues all require unique information and analysis techniques uncommon to a typical military force. These new concerns did not replace, but were in addition to, intelligence requirements such as developing enemy orders of battle.

Partners and Sources

One of the most notable CMO challenges is working with international agencies and unusual ad hoc staff sections.

In Somalia, international and national agencies included UN organizations and government relief and development agencies. In Haiti, the US-led multinational force worked with the International Police Monitors and US Justice Department. In Bosnia, partners included the International Police Task Force (IPTF), the UN Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Office of the High Representative and the European Community Monitoring Mission.

Internally, intelligence officers worked with engineers, the civil-military task force (CMTF) and analysts from the Office of the Chief of Staff. Psychological operations and public affairs (PA) personnel also played a role in collecting and analyzing information. These partners merge in a complex emergency to work as a team to execute a CMO.

In addition to the qualitative challenges of civil-sector issues and new information and intelligence partners, the intelligence component will have a quantitative challenge: numerous intelligence sources, intelligence partners and clients for information.

US Army

A captain from the 3d Special Forces Group teaches English to a group of Haitian soldiers in Gonaives, Haiti, October 1994.

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An operation, which is strictly military, enjoys a relatively clean intelligence architecture, with a clear concept of who is responsible for which tasks and who has authority. Such clarity might be impossible to achieve in a multinational CMO. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, senior NATO intelligence officers managed a network of information sources and intelligence partners more complex than that managed in a conventional conflict.[2] These included the Allied Military Intelligence Battalion (AMIB), national intelligence centers (NICs)—collocated with Stabilization Force (SFOR) headquarters in Sarajevo—national civilian intelligence agencies, civilian organization information sources and numerous staff elements. Future peace support operations are likely to pull together a similar assortment of intelligence organizations, agencies and assets that will present a challenge for integration and management.

Intelligence challenges. These challenges create a different environment for the intelligence organization within the military command for which many military personnel have trained. The intelligence challenge is part of the larger challenge for military professionals adapting to the CMO demands that seem to dominate the current international military environment.

Several obstacles emerge when providing adequate intelligence support to military commanders during CMO. Many military officers and civilian defense officials seem inclined to distinguish between the military mission and the civil mission. This type of distinction certainly occurs within the US debate. Many of the concepts related to mission creep derive from the idea that military tasks should be finite and should not significantly involve the military in the civilian sector.

In reality, these operations are civil-military missions. Intelligence staffs operating within the traditional intelligence framework will likely resist examining the civilian sector. This will leave them poorly prepared to deal with the questions that the commander will inevitably ask about civil affairs.

Different concerns and requirements. Intelligence officers prepare throughout their careers for conventional warfare, but the reality of the contingencies during the 1990s will surprise many. The warfighting mission does not require analysis of government corruption, police brutality, organized

crime, refugee movement patterns, international development funding, the local economy or spontaneous riots. Many intelligence processes, such as intelligence preparation of the battlefield, remain relevant for dealing with these questions but will have to be applied differently.[3] One challenge for the intelligence staff will be determining what questions are relevant to the new situation. The commander may be caught in the same trap of separating military and civilian missions; the intelligence staff will need to help the commander understand the questions he should be asking.

In a complex emergency involving multinational forces, such authority will not necessarily be apparent. While the intelligence staff will continue to work for the military commander, it might be required to share intelligence; however, US security restrictions might hamper such sharing. Consequently, US-released information might be perceived as being too heavily censored to be useful.

The intelligence staff will have to cope with a new set of questions and develop different analytical methods to support the commander's intelligence requirements for decisionmaking in CMO.

Every military organization has some form of intelligence structure. In a tactical combat force, these personnel have trained to support combat operations by assessing enemy capabilities and perceiving enemy intentions. In a contingency, the brigade commander will require other types of intelligence to support his decisionmaking, including voting patterns, relocation sites, school schedules and crowd control measures. Traditional intelligence techniques, training and sources do not necessarily address these issues.

The training that intelligence personnel need to prepare them to perform their duties in CMO should be different from the training that prepares them for conventional combat operations. Most tactical military units do not have the intelligence capacity to tackle these questions. Most nations' intelligence personnel have experience with many of the relevant economic and political questions that will emerge in a transition operation. These personnel, however, frequently specialize in strategic, not tactical, questions. These specialists are often limited in number, making their availability problematic. This suggests that military intelligence staffs will require augmentation to deal with new issues.

In some cases, the intelligence staff has outsourced such questions. The Operational Analysis Branch, Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, developed a means to track activity in the civilian sector in Bosnia in 1996. The chief of staff's assessment cell developed relationships with international organizations to collect and analyze information for SFOR. Such outsourcing is not inappropriate but should be coordinated to ensure the intelligence staff has all available information.

New sources required. New assessment and investigation call for new sources. International agencies and NGOs are rich sources of information and databases. In an operation with an established government, such as Bosnia, the government ministries might provide information that will help build the overall intelligence picture.

The Internet is another valuable tool. The intelligence staff will literally have a world of data at its fingertips to support analysis. Information technology has made accessing the Internet relatively easy from anywhere in the world. Demographic data, press reports, historical material and maps are readily available; however, the credibility and reliability of sources and data must be checked.

New sources are not only outside the force but inside as well. Other staff sections will gather information, increasing the amount of information that staff elements will gather collectively. During combat operations, for example, the public affairs officer (PAO) will rarely be on the front lines. In Haiti or Bosnia, on the other hand, PAOs frequently escorted reporters throughout the theater. The intelligence staff does not normally request information support from PAOs and typically does not think of PAOs as tactical information gatherers. Unless the headquarters establishes procedures or relationships that ensure the movement of PAO information, it is not likely that it will ever be incorporated into the intelligence picture to support command decisionmaking.

Unclear Boundaries

The CMO intelligence officer must be skilled in collaborating without clear lines of responsibility or authority. When considering conventional conflict, the intelligence staff clearly understands that it works for the commander and that the staff has the authority to request intelligence support from national or allied collection assets.

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US Army

A patrol questions Kurdish fighters about Iraqi troop movements near Swaratuka, Iraq, summer 1991.

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share intelligence; however, US security restrictions might hamper such sharing. Consequently, US-released information might be perceived as being too heavily censored to be useful. This practice led NGO personnel in Bosnia to view US threat briefings as marginally beneficial; they believed they received more complete information from the IPTF and from each other.[4]

With the presence of more significant partner agencies, the intelligence staff might be directed to provide more than just the occasional briefing to an NGO forum. It might be asked to help such agencies as the IPTF to establish its own intelligence mechanisms. Again, deciding what information and intelligence the intelligence staff should share is a serious concern. By publicly briefing NGO staffs, the information is no longer secure. The reality of the civil-military partnership suggests that if the military does not share information, neither will NGOs.

Some organizations are more open to such partnerships, and countries are increasingly involving them in CMO. They become de facto intelligence organizations.

One fallacy of civil-military relationships is comparing the seemingly confused nature of civilian organizations with the supposed clarity of the military command and control structure. Rarely is a distinction made among the national intelligence organizations participating in a multinational force. Actually, the intervening multinational force consists of numerous organizations. In Bosnia during 1996 and 1997, these militaries included:

- NATO Implementation Force (IFOR) and SFOR.
- National support elements and commands.
- A UN mission.
- Military forces assigned to support the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) mission.

This list lends more clarity to the actual environment than existed in reality. IFOR included elements from 33 nations, often from more than one service in each country. The main headquarters had a NATO intelligence staff and more than 10 nations maintaining their own NICs within the headquarters. Each nation had specific regulations on sharing intelligence material, and there was only one incomplete intelligence information movement between the NICs and the NATO force.

Typically, intelligence personnel work with the J3 and J5 during conventional combat operations. This should change in a CMO responding to a complex emergency. Intelligence personnel will likely have to establish relationships with other staff sections to ensure an adequate flow of information. . . . This has to be an educational process, on both sides, . . . [and] in many cases, this will also be a sensitive process.

Changing staff relationships. The J2 staff will coordinate with organizations different from those of a traditional combat operation. Typically, intelligence personnel work with the J3 (current operations) and J5 (plans) during conventional combat operations.

This should change in a CMO responding to a complex emergency. Intelligence personnel will likely have to establish relationships with other staff sections to ensure an adequate flow of information to support intelligence analysis. This has to be an educational process, on both sides, one that emphasizes the importance and value of such contacts. In many cases, this will also be a sensitive process.

Lawyers, doctors, civil affairs officers and PAOs do not ordinarily associate with intelligence activities. In a warfighting environment, this rarely impacts the intelligence staff's ability to support the commander; however, during civil-military missions, these and other staff functions, such as engineering, logistics, purchasing and personnel, collect information as part of their normal business, information that could be critical for developing a robust intelligence picture. The intelligence staff must develop contacts with sister staff sections and work to support them as well.

All this suggests that staff relationships should be different in a CMO than in a conventional combat operation. As one civil affairs officer on the Joint Task Force 190 staff in Haiti phrased it: "The intelligence guys remained behind their barriers, and none of us had the clearances to go in and talk with them. On the other hand, it isn't as if they came and spoke with us."[5]

In Haiti and elsewhere, intelligence staffs have frequently remained isolated from elements of the command staff. This hampered operational success both by limiting the flow of information to the intelligence staff to support analysis and by limiting intelligence support to new clients.

New Clients

Along with new sources and new partners, the intelligence staff also has new clients for its products and may have to develop new products to support its new clients.

For example, during past operations, the United States has experienced a problem with intelligence material not being releasable to foreign nationals, governments or non-US citizens (NOFORN), which restricts the ability to share material with partners in a coalition operation. In CMO, the issue will not only be sharing classified material with military partners but also how to share sensitive but unclassified material with civilian organizations.

The problem will be multilayered. NGOs in Bosnia-Herzegovina found briefings from the IPTF more valuable because the IPTF was more forthcoming than was IFOR or SFOR, who had to clear information for public release before discussing it during NGO meetings. Clearly, the same rules could not be applied to discussions with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Office of the High Representative, World Bank, OSCE and other major civilian organizations on the ground as partner organizations with the NATO military force.

The problems are not just external but internal as well. Normally, sensitive material is not discussed with civil affairs or PA representatives who regularly interact with outside organizations. And, just as intelligence personnel may not routinely use these new staffs for intelligence support, these new staffs may not be comfortable asking for intelligence support and may need to be educated on how to ask.

Despite all these tensions, an intelligence staff might need to provide intelligence support to several different types of new clients:

- NGOs. Will the intelligence staff provide material to NGOs on the security situation and potential threats to NGO personnel or activities?
- World Bank. Will intelligence personnel be asked to support fiscal audits for the World Bank to determine whether local governments are diverting

US Army

A Honduran teacher and US soldier distribute school supplies during a *FUERTES CAMINOS* exercise.

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funds to illegal arms purchases? Will they help the World Bank understand and track corruption?

- Election officials. Will the intelligence staff be asked to monitor elections and assess their fairness?
- Contractors. Will the intelligence staff need to investigate ownership of buildings for the command's contracting officers so that the command does not rent a building owned by a war criminal or drug lord?

With all these different actors on the ground, the military intelligence manager will face a significant new challenge on how to coordinate information collection, analysis and intelligence production to support the commander and new clients. Even without examining new clients, there is the difficult challenge of weaving together the several different civilian, military, national and multinational intelligence organizations that will be involved in an operation to create a unified picture to support the commander.

Balancing the old with the new. CMO intelligence requirements do not replace traditional intelligence requirements found in conventional combat operations. For example, in CMO, not only do collection managers gather information about conventional forces, but they may also have to track refugee movements or monitor elections.

Balancing traditional requirements with emerging demands in a civil-military environment will remain a challenge. Intelligence staffs will focus on threats to the force, which are often traditionally defined as armed threats. Even here, however, the military intelligence staff will be working with new issues such as understanding terrorist and unconventional threats to the force. The intelligence staff may have to develop analytical tools to study criminal threats to force personnel. In a complex emergency, the intelligence staff will have no choice but to shift at least some focus from military to civilian analysis.

Augmenting intelligence staffs. To manage new analytical challenges, augmenting lower-level staff positions with civilian experts may be a consideration. Relevant specialties could include regional experts, political scientists, relief or development specialists, organized crime experts and economists.

Since the operational environment is civil-military, there should be combined civil-military intelligence teams at all levels. It seems likely that few governments have enough functional area specialists on the government payroll to meet all these requirements. Perhaps this is an arena in which to develop reservists with the requisite skills.

Advances in information technology may even allow the command to rely on remote augmentation. Future intelligence managers may have a staff of analysts who manage Internet communications and video teleconferencing. These analysts would not necessarily be government employees but university professors or businessmen.

Information technology. The world is in an information revolution, making massive changes in communication and information processing. This has important implications for intelligence communities around the world. These effects should extend into CMO as well. For example, intelligence staffs cannot ignore the Internet—available data are too important. This requires the headquarters to be wired and the intelligence staff to have unclassified computers for searching the web. The intelligence community should create and maintain electronic databases with material collected from these new sources. In an operation that extends over several years, such databases might provide the only real continuity in an operation where the military staff rotates at least twice a year. Intelligence staffs might also exploit commercial databases to support information requirements.

Such databases again raise the issue of sharing with partners. If the intelligence staff is simply in a receive mode to fill its databases, other organizations might become reluctant to continue supplying the information. Thus, the staff may attempt to maintain a shared unclassified, nonsensitive database for all players to use while reserving a separate, more comprehensive database for internal use. In fact, the intelligence staff might support creating a website for sharing the nonsensitive material with all interested parties. Such openness would likely foster cooperative information sharing.

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Military officers preparing for the battlefields of the 21st century have found it difficult to adapt to the realities of CMO. To support decisionmaking, these operations demand a different concept about what information should be collected, how it should be analyzed and what constitutes intelligence from that analyzed information.

These challenges, however, are on multiple levels. The first challenge is to recognize that there are new challenges. After this comes a long educational process. Intelligence officers will have to educate not only themselves and their staffs but also other staff sections. There is even the challenge of educating the commander on priority intelligence requirements peculiar to CMO.

Building relationships within the staff, however, might be simple compared to the challenge of dealing with the multitude of other organizations that will be involved alongside the military force, organizations that can provide critical information but will also solicit information in return. Military officers are aware of these new requirements. This knowledge has to be translated into training and education so that preparation does not fall to on-the-job training. Military forces should also identify which issues lie outside military expertise and preparation. Identifying such requirements will develop a structure for appropriately augmenting the military force to provide befitting intelligence support. ***MR***

NOTES

1. It turned out the attempted marijuana sale was illegal. A bilingual, English-Creole version of the Haitian law code was available in bookstores in Haiti.
2. In this context, the reference is to the IFOR and SFOR CJ-2 in the November 1996 through mid-1997 period.
3. US Army Field Manual 34-130, *Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 8 July 1994).
4. Many IO and NGO staff personnel commented that they appreciated NATO security briefings more as a sign of NATO interest in NGOs than for the information they provided.
5. Comments made by a civil affairs officer from Joint Task Force 190 to the author in Haiti, Spring 1998. There appeared to be a more integrated relationship at the brigade level in Haiti.

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